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Letter dated 23 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach herewith a copy of a message that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan, Ibrahim Ahmed Abd al-Aziz Ghandour, addressed to the Secretary-General (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Magdi Ahmed Mofadal **Elnour**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

I refer to my letter of 27 February 2017, which transmitted a list of violations by armed movements of the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Government of the Sudan and renewed on a number of occasions over the course of a year and a half. I now write to apprise you of a dangerous development and flagrant violation not only of the ceasefire, but also of the most important established principle of the Charter of the United Nations regarding violations of the sovereignty of States and their territory. At a time when our armed forces are exercising the utmost restraint to uphold the ceasefire declared by the President of the Republic, the armed movements have escalated their attacks. They have done so in order to provoke the armed forces and trigger a military response, thereby undermining the ceasefire and destroying the positive momentum that had been achieved since the situation in Darfur became fully stable.

With respect to our western border, since the beginning of May 2017 our specialized agencies have observed military stockpiling activities and the deployment on the western side of the border of rebel forces that had been fighting as mercenaries in Libya. By 8 May 2017, 172 armed vehicles and 12 armoured vehicles were deployed in the area of Rabyanah on the Libyan side of the border. These forces were commanded by the rebel leaders Jabir Ishaq, Salih Jabal and Rajab Jaw. They gradually moved to the area of Bawabat al-Sarah on the border between Libya and the Sudan, and began infiltrating Sudanese territory in groups. The first such group was composed of 50 armed vehicles. They entered Sudanese territory on 17 May 2017, amassing to the east of Bi'r Marqi inside Sudanese borders, then were joined the same day by another 20 armed vehicles. Those forces continued to infiltrate the border on 19 May 2017, when another 35 combat vehicles crossed into the Sudan. On the morning of 20 May 2017, they attacked the front ranks of our armed forces, which were concentrated in the north-eastern part of Bi'r Marqi. The Sudanese armed forces engaged them and defeated them.

With respect to our border with South Sudan, since the beginning of May 2017 our specialized agencies have observed the deployment near the border of 47 armed vehicles belonging to the Minni Arcua Minawi faction commanded by rebel leader Juma Mundi, as well as 49 armed vehicles belonging to the Justice and Equality Movement commanded by rebel leader Sadiq Bungo and another 37 armed vehicles belonging to the Abdul Wahid faction commanded by rebel leader Muhammad Tarradah, bringing the total number of armed vehicles deployed on the border with South Sudan to 133 armed vehicles. Some of these were armoured vehicles and Ural transport trucks carrying weapons and ammunition. On 20 May 2017, 62 armed vehicles crossed the Sudanese border at Sakkara and Shabakat, then took positions in the Ashirayah area, where they clashed with our armed forces in Guz al-Nimayah. Our troops managed to defeat the remnants of the hostile forces and pursue them back over the border.

We hereby bring to your attention this dangerous development, which amounts to a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the military aggression against Sudanese territory and its innocent people. We emphasize that the failure of the international community to take decisive action with respect to these armed movements, even though they have been working as mercenaries in both Libya and South Sudan, has encouraged them to escalate their blatant violations of the ceasefire. The Sudanese Government has repeatedly extended the

ceasefire over the past year and a half in accordance with the requirements of the significant political transition that has been taking place in the country since the adoption of the recommendations of the Sudan National Dialogue and the formation of a government of national accord to implement those recommendations. Furthermore, the five Darfur States have enjoyed security and stability for over two years, as attested by your periodic reports on Darfur, the most recent of which was reviewed by the Security Council on 4 April 2017 (S/2017/250). That point has also been repeatedly confirmed by the visit of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the visit of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan and its Panel of Experts on the Sudan to Darfur, whose reports have noted the improved security and humanitarian situation in the five Darfur States.

In conclusion, the Government of the Sudan maintains its firm and principled position that the door should be open to the leaders of these armed groups to lay down their arms and join the political process without delay. We call on you and the Security Council and the entire international community to condemn these armed movements and hold their leaders accountable for the blatant aggression against the sovereignty and territory of the Sudan, and to condemn those who embrace them or give them financial and logistical support, which impedes development and leads to the killing of defenceless innocents, destruction of infrastructure. We also call on you to press these movements to immediately accede to the calls of the lead African mediator, Thabo Mbeki, to come to the negotiating table and sign the ceasefire declaration, which would lead to a complete and lasting ceasefire and the necessary security arrangements, so that all Sudanese people can reinforce the peace and stability that has been achieved and engage in development and reconstruction.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim Ahmed **Ghandour**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan